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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 6 December 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you in regard to the draft resolution entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo" (A/C.3/50/L.43) prepared by the Republic of Albania in the Third Committee and statements and accusations made on the same subject during the debate in the Committee under agenda item 112.

First of all, a question may be asked why is it necessary for Albania time and again to raise the so-called question of Kosovo?

The alleged problem brought up by the representative of the Republic of Albania, as an example of the violations of human rights, however, has nothing to do with human rights but with the separatist movement headed by the leaders of the Albanian minority and inspired by the authorities of the Republic of Albania. The overriding goal is to achieve the secession of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which would cause the territorial dismemberment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and ultimately the Province's unification with the Republic of Albania.

The Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, an integral part of the Republic of Serbia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, has for 50 years, since 1945, enjoyed cultural and territorial autonomy within Serbia. In 1981, when a violent uprising was staged against the constitutional order of the then Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, all the leading positions in the province, such as the President of the Presidency, the President of the Executive Council, the President of the League of Communists and the provincial secretaries for interior and defence were in the hands of the Albanian minority. At that time, delegates from this province had a veto power in the state

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territory of the then Socialist Republic of Serbia. Unlike minorities elsewhere assembly of Serbia and could influence any decision which concerned the whole in the world, the Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija were running by themselves all aspects of public life of the province. State and federal authorities, contrary to the Constitution of Serbia and Yugoslavia, could not interfere in the decision-making process of the province.

In addition to that, a number of key federal posts at the state and party level were occupied by the representatives of persons belonging to the Albanian minority (S. Hasani, President of the Presidency of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; I. Kurteshi, Speaker of the Assembly of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; A. Shukria, President of the Presidency of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia; and A. Vlasi, President of the Youth Organization).

Instead of respecting the Constitution and laws of Yugoslavia and Serbia and fully integrating themselves in the social and political life as loyal citizens, the Albanian minority, guided by extreme nationalist party leaders and propaganda from Tirana, opted not to exercise the autonomy and the rights provided for by the Constitution. In so doing, they boycotted the census, elections and political institutions of the Republic of Serbia. For their decisions, they blamed the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia categorically rejects malicious and ill-intentioned charges on the alleged human rights violations of the Albanian minority. The problem, however, lies elsewhere. The Albanians have intentionally rejected the exercise of their rights. That is evident from the fact that all other minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, especially in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, exercise their rights under the Constitution. For example, they have a right to education in their mother tongue at all levels recognized by European standards. Local municipalities where a minority population is a majority are run by the representatives of the minority political parties. Freedom of expression is manifested in numerous radio and television stations broadcasting minority programmes and by a variety of newspapers published in minority languages. The Assembly of the Autonomous Province, which is the centre of political activity, as well as the provincial government, have a wide mandate in implementing the cultural and territorial autonomy of the province.

How is it that persons belonging to the Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak and other minorities in the Province of Vojvodina freely exercise their human rights whereas the Albanian minority in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija claims to be oppressed. The problem stems from the prevailing thinking of the political leadership of the Albanian minority, headed by Ibrahim Rugova, that they (Albanians) are not interested in any minority, democratic or autonomy rights but only in the secession of Kosovo.

The political leadership of the Albanian minority in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, an ardent advocate of segregation, prohibits the entire Albanian minority population from being employed, going to public schools, visiting health institutions or in any other way being associated with

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the state of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Those who try to disobey are subjected to various forms of harassment with the approval of the Albanian leadership. Owing to such policies, today a modest number of Albanians are employed in the local police, health institutions, schools and universities of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. At the same time, the Albanian political leadership levies its own taxes on the Albanian minority for running the self-proclaimed "Republic of Kosovo". This is done both in the Province as well as abroad. It is very hard to believe that some foreign Governments that are host to a large segment of Albanian immigrants from Kosovo are not aware of this fact, or are not willing to prevent such activities. Today, it is also common knowledge that the biggest drug traffickers in some parts of Europe are Albanians from Kosovo. It is estimated that in Switzerland, the majority of the illicit drug trafficking is in the hands of Albanians. The revenue from this usually winds up in the hands of Albanian separatists for the promotion of the cause of secession of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

At the same time, the authorities of the Republic of Albania, who are encouraging separatism in Kosovo, do not recognize the rights of Yugoslav national minorities in their country. They even deny their existence and deprive them of all their cultural and religious rights and freedoms. For example, members of the Serbian national minority are denied the right to the official use of their mother tongue in schools and newspapers and on radio and television. The facilities of the Serbian Orthodox Church are being desecrated and its property is being seized.

Most revealing of the Republic of Albania's real motives about the phantom State, the so-called "Republic of Kosovo", is the statement of the People's Assembly of the Republic of Albania of 22 October 1991 (A/C.1/50/4, annex) by which the Assembly "recognizes the Republic of Kosovo as a sovereign and independent State". While the Albanian representatives are eager to pronounce publicly that their country upholds all the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, they at the same time do not hesitate to covet territories in neighbouring countries.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 112 (c).

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
